

Managing fitness to practise concerns in education and training

Case study one

These case studies cover a number of issues that can occur in a range of education and training settings and relate to aspiring pharmacy professionals. They are designed to help individuals and organisations interpret and understand the principles of the guidance in practice.

Theme: Serious misconduct

What happened?

John is a second-year pharmacy student. He is a high performing student and has excelled in his two years. He is also an active member of a number of student clubs and bodies.

On a night out late in the academic year John was at a student bar with some fellow second year students. They were celebrating a birthday and had been drinking. As the evening progresses one of the students suggests moving on to a club and the evening extends into a late night and heavy drinking.

An altercation in the club resulted in John striking another man causing actual bodily harm. The police were called, and John was arrested for assault. He was later convicted and received a fine.

John notified his school of pharmacy of the incident when it occurred and the subsequent conviction.

What action did the school take?

Once the school was notified about the conviction it decided that the concern potentially called into question John's fitness to practise and that an investigation should take place to gather further evidence.

The investigation included:

- interviewing John, during which he expressed remorse for his actions and highlighted that he had attended an alcohol awareness course
- interviewing his tutor, during which the tutor highlighted that the incident was out of character
- reviewing the details of the conviction.

The investigator then assessed the evidence against criteria that may indicate that a student's fitness to practise was impaired. The evidence suggested that there was a breach of the criteria. This meant the matter was referred to a fitness to practise panel (a small group of individuals with the training and expertise to

make an impartial decision about whether John's fitness to practise was impaired).

What action did the panel take?

In advance of the hearing John was provided with the relevant guidance and documentation.

A three-person panel was convened, and John attended with a legal representative. The panel heard the facts of the case and took evidence from John and read testimonials submitted on his behalf.

The panel took all the facts into consideration including:

- Details of John's conviction.
- His year of study - he was not nearing graduation so there was time for John to show remediation and demonstrate how he has learnt from the incident.
- His good academic record and positive character testimonies.
- His engagement with the police investigation and the student fitness to practise process.
- The potential impact of the conviction in terms of professional practice, risk to the public, risks to the reputation of the profession and the University.
- His remorse and the remediation efforts he had shown already by apologising to the victim and attending the course.

Taking everything into account the panel decided on the facts and then on impairment. They decided that John was impaired on the basis that his conviction had an impact on public confidence in the profession.

They gave John credit for his engagement, insight and remediation. However, as it was a serious conviction, he was suspended for three months.

Support John received

John had a legal representative attend the panel hearing. Attending a hearing can be a difficult experience and the support John received in understanding the process and having someone help him articulate his points clearly was very helpful. He felt the proceedings were fair and that if he was facing the three-person panel without support he may not have been as confident.

John also received support from the school and from his tutor.

Key learning

Legal representation at hearings

If a student/trainee is considering seeking advice from a legal representative, they should notify their education or training provider. Students/trainees should be encouraged to have a supporter or legal representative present.

Support from education providers

Education providers should support students/trainees during fitness to practise investigations and hearings. External organisations, such as the Pharmacists' Defence Association or Pharmacist Support, can also provide support and guidance.

Taking action quickly

With robust processes in place the school was able to assess the concern and quickly decide it was something that should be investigated. This provided clarity to all parties and avoided any unnecessary delays.

John was candid about what happened and notified the school as soon as he could. He engaged with the process throughout and demonstrated insight into his conduct and the impact it had. This reflected well on John with the panel.

The importance of remediation

John's willingness to reflect on his behaviour and accept responsibility for his actions shows he understands the impact and he is willing to learn from his mistakes. This was important when the panel came to decide on the outcome.

What are the implications of fitness to practise findings for a student's future career?

The implications of student fitness to practise for a student's career depend on the circumstances of the individual case.

John had to report this when applying to the GPhC.

In the overwhelming majority of cases, this will not be a barrier to qualifying as a pharmacy professional, as long as the student cooperates with their school's fitness to practise processes and demonstrates remediation.

Schools must only graduate students who they deem fit to practise. Therefore, if there are no further issues that call into question John's

fitness to practise he should be able to continue to apply for registration. It is rare for someone to be refused registration, usually when their behaviour is deemed fundamentally incompatible with registration. For example, a serious sexual assault or when they have demonstrated no insight or not learnt from an incident.

What if...?

The outcome could have been different had some elements been missing or John's attitude towards the proceedings had been different.

What are your thoughts if John:

- hadn't reported the issue to the school
- hadn't engaged in the process or demonstrated remediation and remorse
- hadn't taken a legal representative to the hearing
- had been demonstrating professionalism outside of immediate clinical studies.

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Case study two

These case studies cover a number of issues that can occur in a range of education and training settings and relate to aspiring pharmacy professionals. They are designed to help individuals and organisations interpret and understand the principles of the guidance in practice.

Theme: Drug misuse

What happened?

Charlotte is a pre-registration pharmacist trainee working in a small community pharmacy. Her recreational drug taking has increased following the break-up of her relationship with her boyfriend and her parents' recent divorce. She did not feel the need to declare any issues prior to her pre-registration year as an MPharm student, as she felt it was manageable at the time. Her friends, who she shares a house with, have noticed this is affecting her health and how she behaves. Charlotte's pre-registration tutor had noticed that over the past couple of months her attendance wasn't as good as it usually was, and she had been sent home on one occasion in the pharmacy due to her appearance and notable poor physical state. She explained this was due to tiredness after a virus. Charlotte has also been caught at a club in possession of a class A drug and received a caution from the police. She declared her situation to her tutor and was receptive to receiving the necessary support. However, she is very worried about what has happened and doesn't know what to do next.

What action did the tutor take?

Charlotte's tutor took swift action to provide support for her once she acknowledged she had a problem. In particular, her tutor:

- Held regular meetings with Charlotte to document, accurately and clearly the issues that had affected her progress.
- Took all reasonable steps to respond to a request for support from Charlotte and record all requests for support; what was said in meetings; and further actions to resolve matters.
- Took care not to make assumptions or be judgemental about Charlotte's difficulties regarding her lifestyle.
- Encouraged her to be open and honest with the employer.

What other action was taken?

Charlotte notified the employer about her issues and caution. Upon discussion with the employer and taking account of the internal standard operating procedures in place on employee health, it was decided by the employer that Charlotte would be able to continue with her pre-registration year, under certain conditions. This was based on the fact that:

- Charlotte expressed remorse for her actions and acknowledged she had a problem.
- Whilst she demonstrated poor judgement, she had been honest and upfront about her health.

- The testimony from her tutor stated that, until the incident which led to her caution, she was of good character.
- Charlotte had demonstrated a professional attitude throughout her pre-registration year.
- The context in which the issues arose.
- Charlotte has proactively sought counselling to address her drug use and has been to her GP.
- She had fully engaged with her employer's disciplinary process.

Support Charlotte received

The support that was put in place enabled Charlotte to address the problems and change her lifestyle. She is doing well under the supervision of her GP and is on course to complete her training year.

Charlotte's tutor advised her that she should note the caution and her health issues on her application form to register with the GPhC, which she did. The GPhC also requested confirmation from Charlotte's GP and other health professionals involved in her care about her rehabilitation. Character references from tutors, employers, family and friends were also helpful.

Key learning

Disclosing health and conduct issues

If a student or trainee receives a conviction or has a health issue, it is important that they disclose this to their education provider and the GPhC when they apply to register.

Providers should also raise any issues that might affect a student or trainee's suitability for future registration to the GPhC.

In normal circumstances, the GPhC does not investigate concerns about student or trainee fitness to practise. However, if after having assessed a concern a tutor considers that the concern is serious and relates to a trainee's

fitness to practise that could affect their suitability for future registration, the tutor should raise it with the GPhC or another relevant person or body. Serious concerns include those which may be criminal or may have significant safety implications for patients, members of the public or members of the pharmacy team.

The role of the tutor in supporting students and trainees

Tutors play a key role in helping students and trainees to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding and behaviours they need to meet the standards expected of a pharmacy professional. Raising concerns about a trainee's performance at an early stage with a trainee can help to identify areas of practice that can be improved. If possible, concerns should be addressed at an early stage between the trainee, their tutor and perhaps their employer or superintendent pharmacist. However, it is important that tutors are aware of the different escalation procedures in place and support channels that are available.

What are the implications of fitness to practise findings for a pre-registration trainees' future career?

The implications of fitness to practise issues for an aspiring professional's career depend on circumstances of the individual case. In the majority of cases, this will not be a barrier to qualifying as a pharmacy professional, as long as the person engages with processes, demonstrates insight and doesn't pose a risk to patients and the public.

What if...?

- Charlotte had approached her doctor or someone for support earlier
- Charlotte hadn't demonstrated insight into her issues
- Charlotte hadn't sought support and acted on advice from her tutor

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Case study three

These case studies cover a number of issues that can occur in a range of education and training settings and relate to aspiring pharmacy professionals. They are designed to help individuals and organisations interpret and understand the principles of the guidance in practice.

Theme: Academic malpractice and plagiarism

What happened?

Craig is a pharmacist who is also enrolled on an independent prescribing programme at his local university. As his studies progressed he began struggling with the demands of working in a small, busy pharmacy and juggling this with the requirements to complete the independent prescribing training. Mid way through his course, he was required to submit a piece of work. Craig managed to submit work in time but included some information from a website without attributing it properly. This was identified by his university. He attended an academic misconduct panel meeting at the university and subsequently, a health and conduct committee hearing, in relation to poor academic practice and for stress. As a result, he had to resubmit a piece of coursework and undertake a two-month break from the course. During his break from the programme, Craig became friends with Megan who was also on the same course.

In resuming his studies, Craig was due to submit a paper in order to progress in the programme but felt that he was unable to do so in the required timeframe. Craig made the decision to ask Megan if he could submit a paper she had completed the year previous as his own work. Megan agreed to this. Upon submitting the paper online, the university's plagiarism

software identified a high level of similarity between Craig's paper and the paper submitted by Megan.

The university subsequently carried out an investigation. Through a series of interviews and written statements, both Craig and Megan denied that they colluded to help Craig submit his paper. However, after the university obtained WhatsApp messages between the pair, it was clear that Craig had plagiarised, and that Megan had colluded in this.

What action did the university take?

The university carried out a robust investigation which resulted in the case being referred for a hearing. At the hearing it was noted that both Craig and Megan had breached both the university regulations on plagiarism and the standards for pharmacy professionals relating to the 'duty of candour'. The University felt that this amounted to misconduct and decided on the following outcomes:

What action did the university take against Megan?

- The University decided to take no action against Megan as they were content it was an isolated incident of dishonesty.
- They did ask her to inform the GPhC and her employer, which she did.
- Megan made a full and frank admission of her behaviour at the University's hearing.

She explained that she made an error of judgement in an attempt to help a friend, and the panel felt that she had showed insight in to her actions.

- She accepted that she had breached the University regulations on collusion but was unaware of the extent to which Craig had plagiarised her work.

What action did the university take against Craig?

- Craig was found guilty of academic malpractice and was awarded with a mark of zero on his paper.
- Craig was also given a final warning on the course that he was on.
- Craig was asked to inform the GPhC and his employer, which he did.
- He explained the stress that he had been under at the time of the incident had impacted his judgement.
- He explained the steps he had taken to prevent such an incident from happening again.

What action did the employer take?

Both Craig and Megan notified their employer immediately of what happened and had been open and honest about these proceedings. Megan received support from the senior managers in her employment. She undertook the relevant training and development and had reflected on what she did wrong which led to the university's initial investigation.

Craig continues to be supported by his employer and he has line management responsibility for other members of staff. He has been open about these proceedings and has played an active role in using his own experiences to inform his colleagues of the importance of maintaining professional standards at all times.

What action did the GPhC take?

Following an investigation, both Craig and Megan's cases progressed to the GPhC Fitness to Practise Committee. This resulted in the following outcome:

- Craig was given a warning.
- No action was taken against Megan.

Key learning

Providing support can prevent issues arising

The provision of support and preventing issues occurring is important. The support that Megan received from her employer allowed her to take the necessary steps to ensure an incident would not happen again.

If a pharmacy professional is aware of a struggling colleague, they should take the appropriate steps to provide support and advice but should always keep in mind the standards for pharmacy professionals and to act with integrity. It is important that any issues are identified as early as possible.

Education and training providers play a key role in encouraging students and trainees to develop and demonstrate integrity, insight and honesty when things go wrong.

Demonstrating insight, integrity and honesty as a student or trainee

Craig took steps in a difficult situation that put his career at risk. By concealing what he did, he made matters worse for himself. Pharmacy professionals should always be open and honest and act with integrity. If difficult situations arise they should seek support through the school, their employer or other resources.

Those who are pharmacy professionals or are training towards becoming a pharmacy professional should ensure that they are honest at all times.

What if...?

- Craig had approached his tutor to discuss the date the paper needed to be submitted.
- Megan had notified the course tutors about Craig's struggles and his request to submit her paper.

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Case study four

These case studies cover a number of issues that can occur in a range of education and training settings and relate to aspiring pharmacy professionals. They are designed to help individuals and organisations interpret and understand the principles of the guidance in practice.

Theme: Inappropriate use of social media

What happened?

Paulo is a fourth-year pharmacy student who is on course to enter his pre-registration year. Whilst on a clinical placement at a hospital pharmacy he took a 'selfie' behind the dispensing counter to show off his new haircut. He posted the picture on Instagram. Unbeknownst to Paulo he had inadvertently included the location of the hospital and a prescription was also partially visible in the background of the photo.

Paulo only intended his friends, who are also students on the same course, to see the photo. However, one of them 'liked' the photo and decided to share it more widely. A fellow student who had seen the photo felt that posting a photo of this nature was unprofessional and a breach of confidentiality. They decided to refer the incident to the school and asked Paulo to remove the photo, which he did.

What action did the school take?

Given the nature of the concern and the evidence received when it was referred, the school started a fitness to practise investigation into the incident involving Paulo. They also identified the students who had shared or 'liked' the photo. The school appointed an investigator

who spoke with each of the students to establish the facts of the case. Paulo was made aware of the support available to him through the student support services and his personal tutor.

Once the investigation was complete the investigator decided to refer the case to the school's fitness to practise committee. It was clear to the committee that the actions of Paulo, and subsequently his fellow students had the potential to bring the profession into disrepute and their behaviour called into question their professional judgement. There were also some serious patient confidentiality issues for the committee to consider as well.

What other action was taken?

Despite accepting his responsibility in the incident, Paulo felt that it had been blown out of proportion. As a result, the panel felt that he had not shown any insight into his behaviour and had only removed the photo due to peer pressure. The panel heard evidence from his tutor who confirmed his lack of insight in previous conversations he had with Paulo. Taken all this into account, including the seriousness of revealing a patient's personal details, the panel decided to impose conditions. They asked Paulo to:

- undertake a series of reflective pieces of work on professionalism,

- complete an assignment on the importance of confidentiality and
- to attend regular meetings with his tutor to assess his progress in understanding what he did was wrong.

The other students involved in the incident also attended a panel hearing. They deeply regretted their actions and showed genuine remorse. Therefore, the panel decided that their fitness to practise was not impaired.

Key learning

Demonstrating professionalism online

Pharmacy professionals, students and trainees have the same responsibilities and obligations when interacting online as they do when they interact face-to-face. The GPhC expects pharmacy professionals to use good judgement and behave professionally when using social media.

Social media is a powerful way for pharmacy professionals to collaborate with their peers, colleagues and the general public. But it can blur the boundaries between personal and professional use.

Schools, education and training providers should ensure that students and trainees are aware of their duty to uphold the reputation of the profession at all times and that they may jeopardise their ability to join the GPhC register if they misuse social media.

The important of demonstrating insight

Because Paulo did not appreciate that his use of social media might breach confidentiality, the panel considered conditions were necessary.

Maintaining people's confidentiality

When pharmacy professionals, students and trainees do not handle confidential information appropriately it can damage public trust and confidence in the pharmacy professions and other healthcare professions.

It is essential that pharmacy professionals and those training or studying to become a pharmacy professional take steps to protect the confidential information they come into contact with. In particular, they should make sure not to disclose information on any websites, internet chat forums or social media that could, or potentially could, identify a person or patient.

What are the implications of fitness to practise findings for a student's future career?

The implications of fitness to practise issues for an aspiring professional's career depend on circumstances of the individual case. In the majority of cases, this will not be a barrier to qualifying as a pharmacy professional, as long as the person engages with processes, demonstrates insight and doesn't pose a risk to patients and the public, as is the case with the students in the above example.

What if...?

- Paulo had been remorseful to his tutor earlier in the process?
- Paulo had demonstrated insight into his actions with the panel?

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Case study five

These case studies cover a number of issues that can occur in a range of education and training settings and relate to aspiring pharmacy professionals. They are designed to help individuals and organisations interpret and understand the principles of the guidance in practice.

Theme: Managing health issues

What happened?

Sharan is a pre-registration pharmacist trainee. She has an excellent academic record and but is not enjoying her placement at a branch of a large multiple pharmacy group. Sharan is starting to worry about the increasing workload in the busy pharmacy and is nervous about having more contact with patients. She didn't speak to anyone about how she felt as she worried they might think she couldn't cope.

As the placement year progressed Sharan became more stressed and had trouble sleeping which affected her concentration. Some days she couldn't attend work due to migraines and relationship problems with her boyfriend began to develop. As a result, Sharan began to miss work on a number of occasions and had made a number of errors in the pharmacy. She felt depressed but did not seek any medical support.

One of Sharan's friends, and a fellow trainee, noticed she didn't seem to be her normal, confident self and appeared withdrawn and upset. He encouraged Sharan to go and see her GP and speak to her tutor, but Sharan didn't want to. She was worried the GP would tell her employer and the problems she was experiencing would compromise her ability to become a pharmacy professional. Sharan continued to struggle. Her attendance and performance continued to deteriorate.

Her tutor became concerned and met to discuss the matters with Sharan. She did not tell him about her feeling depressed, her struggles with the pre-reg year or her personal struggles. She was worried that the employer wouldn't support her or sign off her training.

The tutor was very concerned and referred Sharan to occupational health.

What action did the employer take?

At the occupational health meeting Sharan became upset and admitted she was struggling with her mental health and workplace pressures.

The employer was sympathetic to Sharan's situation. They addressed her level of absence and poor performance and referred her to a counsellor. Sharan also attended her GP, was diagnosed with depression, and received medication.

The tutor also provided a workplace mentor to work closely with Sharan so she could build confidence in the workplace. She also attended a resilience course.

Sharan responded well to the treatment prescribed by the GP and the adjustments put in place by her tutor. With this ongoing support in place, she managed to get back on track and continued with the placement year to a successful conclusion.

Implications for registration

Sharan notified the GPhC of her depression when she made an application to be a registered pharmacy professional.

It was clear that the condition was being managed and Sharan had insight therefore it did not have an impact on her application.

Key learning

Seeking support for health conditions

Carrying on without seeking help was not the best thing to do. Trainees should approach their employer for support if they are struggling to cope with things including academic, financial, social or health issues.

Having a health condition is not a fitness to practise concern. How the student or trainee deals with their condition is what's important. It is not in a student or trainee's interest to conceal a serious health problem.

Showing insight into the impact of a health condition

If a student or trainee understands their condition and seeks appropriate support from a healthcare practitioner and follows their advice, there is no reason for their health to become a fitness to practise concern.

The only circumstances that might involve fitness to practise are when a student or trainee is not showing insight into their condition, not seeking appropriate medical advice, or not complying with treatment. This becomes a fitness to practise issue because the safety of the student/trainee or others around them, as well as confidence in the profession may be compromised.

Being open and honest with your employer and seeking appropriate support and medical advice

is a good example of demonstrating insight into a health issue.

Confidentiality for students and trainees

Sharan was worried about information being shared about her without her consent, and the impacts this might have on her career. Students and trainees have the same rights to confidentiality as other patients. GPs would only transfer confidential information if it was to protect patients and the public. In this case there is no indication Sharan's condition is serious enough to impact on patients. There would be no reason for the GP to tell her employer.

Preventing health issues becoming fitness to practise issues

Employers should respond to health issues appropriately and sensitively. It is important for employers, amongst others, to try and prevent issues becoming fitness to practise matters. This can be achieved by thinking about underperformance or issues at work and considering whether there is an underlying health issue. Clear arrangements about referrals to occupational health and a culture that facilitates being open and honest about concerns will also help.

What if...?

- Sharan had approached her employer for support when she began having problems regarding stress and work anxiety?
- Sharan's friend had notified the tutor about her struggles?
- Sharan had attended the GP to seek support for her depression?
- The employer had addressed Sharan's absence and poor performance sooner?

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Case study six

These case studies cover a number of issues that can occur in a range of education and training settings and relate to aspiring pharmacy professionals. They are designed to help individuals and organisations interpret and understand the principles of the guidance in practice.

Theme: Dishonesty

What happened?

Ashleigh is a pre-registration pharmacy technician trainee working in a large hospital. She is about to start her second year of training. The hospital she works for has enrolled her with a distance learning provider to complete the academic component of her course.

Ashleigh has been making good progress on her course, but the new term has meant changes to her family life. Her two children have changed and started school and Ashleigh is struggling to balance work and her other commitments. Although Ashleigh has found the situation stressful, she has been managing to meet both her work commitments and non-work commitments. In her regular progress meetings, she told her tutor that everything is fine. Her hospital is very busy and Ashleigh is worried that if she asks for help it will create an unfavourable impression.

As the year went on, the workload in the hospital increased and the pharmacy staff found themselves under more pressure. Ashleigh realised she had not completed the required number of activities for her portfolio. She started to worry that completing the number of tasks required would not be possible before she moved to her next placement, as she was already struggling with her clinical work and other commitments. Shortly before the end of

her placement, she found she did not have evidence for two tasks she still needed to complete.

The last day of her placement was very busy and Ashleigh did not get a chance to gather the evidence required for the tasks she needed to complete. Her tutor was also busy and postponed their regular progress meeting. Ashleigh panicked and decided to complete two forms with false details to submit as evidence for her course, falsifying a signature of a supervisor.

Her education provider carried out a routine sample of evidence. They noted that some of the forms submitted by Ashleigh as evidence did not seem quite right - some details were inconsistent or absent. The reviewer for the education provider decided to contact Ashleigh's tutor to see what had happened.

What action did the employer take?

Ashleigh's tutor checked the forms and clearly identified that they did not relate to real activities Ashleigh had carried out. Her tutor arranged a meeting with Ashleigh to ask her what had happened.

During the meeting, Ashleigh became very upset. She admitted that she had not carried out the tasks in question and forged the signature of a supervisor. She explained she was struggling with the workload and other

commitments and was worried about falling behind.

The tutor was sympathetic to Ashleigh's situation but was concerned about the dishonesty involved. Ashleigh's tutor decided to discuss the issue with the HR staff at the hospital. HR agreed the dishonesty might call Ashleigh's fitness to practise into question and initiated an investigation. They gathered statements from Ashleigh, her tutor and the education provider.

The investigation concluded that there was evidence of dishonesty and brought together a panel, including a member of the HR team, a pharmacy professional from another hospital within the health board, and an assessor from the education provider. Ashleigh was invited to attend the panel and offered support from another member of the HR team, and the option of bringing a legal representative and someone else to support her.

The panel heard from Ashleigh and her tutor about the pressure she had been under, and how she had tried hard to meet the requirements and balance her commitments. The panel were concerned about her dishonesty however, and decided remediation and support were needed.

The panel asked Ashleigh to:

- hold a discussion with her tutor about why honesty and integrity were important for pharmacy professionals
- submit a written reflection to the panel and required her to work under close supervision until they could review her progress at a later date.

Support Ashleigh received

The panel also recommended that Ashleigh's shifts were adjusted and reduced, so that she could balance her family commitments more easily. They also referred Ashleigh to the professional support service provided by the local healthcare education and training

commissioning body. This service provided her with additional time and support from a tutor to complete educational tasks and helped her with her time management skills.

Ashleigh engaged positively with reflective submission, recognising that she had responded to the situation in an unprofessional way, and explaining how she would respond to stressful situations in future. The tutor assigned by the professional support service also explained that Ashleigh had engaged well with the process and her time management had improved.

When the panel met again, they considered she had shown insight into her dishonesty and were satisfied she was unlikely to repeat this behaviour.

With the adjustments to her working pattern, she was able to stay on top of her work. The additional support with her educational tasks meant she could complete all the requirements of her course. The panel agreed no further action was necessary but advised Ashleigh to inform the GPhC when she applied to register.

Implications for registration

Ashleigh notified the GPhC about the process she had been through and provided copies of the panel's decision when she made an application to be a registered pharmacy professional.

It was clear that Ashleigh had demonstrated insight and that her employer considered her fit to be a pharmacy professional, and she was permitted to register.

Key learning

Recognising when support is needed

Ashleigh didn't recognise that she was in a difficult situation or that she needed support to stop a more serious concern developing. Ashleigh used her reflective writing to show she had learned to recognise the limits of her capacity and speak up if they were met in future.

This is important for all students and trainees: pharmacy professionals need to take steps to manage their own health and personal circumstances, seeking help when they need it. Pharmacy technician trainees can approach their employer or their education provider for support if they are struggling to cope with work including academic, financial, social or health issues.

Demonstrating honesty and integrity

People receive safe and effective care when pharmacy professionals are trustworthy and act with honesty and integrity. Ashleigh's tutor was concerned that Ashleigh might not act with the honesty and integrity needed to train safely, calling into question her ability to register as a pharmacy professional. Ashleigh had to demonstrate she was likely to act in an honest and trustworthy way in future.

Providing support to students and trainees

Employers should also have routes into support and be prepared to provide adjustments for their trainee staff. If they have concerns about the fitness to practise of learners who are not yet registrants, they need to make sure there are routes and mechanisms to address these concerns. These should be used proactively: sources of support and advice should be made clear to learners, and regular progress meetings between tutors and their students/trainees can be used to identify support needs, track progress and identify issues before they become concerns.

Responsibility for identifying and acting on concerns

Pharmacy technician courses often mean more than one organisation is involved in the education and training of an individual pharmacy technician. In these cases, all organisations have an obligation to raise concerns if they encounter them and share potential concerns with another organisation better placed to investigate and/or address

them. This should be part of the agreements between different organisations involved in the employment, education and training of a trainee pharmacy professional.

What if...?

- Ashleigh had recognised she needed help at an earlier stage?
- Ashleigh's work had provided more information about the support and adjustments available?
- Ashleigh had met with her tutor to explain why she had missed the deadline?
- Ashleigh's dishonesty had not been picked up by the education provider?